



Welaka Gazette

September 2021

From The Mayor's Desk

When I ran for Mayor, I promised always to be transparent with you no matter the situation. As I sit at my desk and write this month's from the "Mayor's Desk," I wish I could do it with good news. Still, the reality is that we are experiencing an upswing in the number of COVID 19 cases not only in Welaka but in Putnam County and across the State of Florida. Right here in Welaka, people you know have lost loved ones to this terrible disease; my heart breaks for them, and I ask you to keep them in your thoughts and prayers. Still, others in our community have battled or are currently battling COVID-19, and they need your prayers as well. Please make no mistake about it. COVID-19 continues to be a real and present danger in our community and our nation, and I ask everyone to please do their part to help slow its spread.

First, if you are medically able to take the COVID-19 vaccine, I ask you to please consider doing so as it continues to be the single best way to slow the spread of COVID-19. The Putnam County Health Department offers all three vaccines free of charge to those 12 and up from Monday to Friday, 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM. Their address is 801 Kennedy St, Palatka, FL 32177. Putnam County offers drive-up COVID-19 testing located at 1101 Husson Ave, Palatka, FL 32177; it is free of charge times are Tuesday and Thursday from 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM. I encourage you to get there early as they are cutting off testing promptly at 2:00 PM.

At Welaka Town Hall, we have prepackaged masks in packs of five available to anyone who wants them. They are on a table in the hallway of Welaka Town Hall. They are free of charge, and I encourage you to stop by and grab a pack. Besides mask, I also encourage you to follow basic hygiene guidelines, including washing your hands frequently, avoiding touching your eyes, nose, or mouth, covering your mouth when you cough or sneeze. Try to avoid large crowds and poorly ventilated spaces when possible and stay home if you are sick or feeling sick. For cleaning and disinfection, clean high-touch surfaces daily. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks. These simple steps can go a long way in stopping this terrible disease.

On a more positive note, I have been looking at the steps necessary to update and modernize your town's government. One deficiency I identified early on was the lack of an organized codebook to reference Town Ordinances. I am pleased to say that your Welaka Town Council has approved me to move forward with a service called Municode to codify or arrange the Town ordinances into a Town of Welaka Municipal Code that can be easily referenced by Town residents and accessible online. This new codebook will not only give you better access to your city government it will also help us identify any deficiencies we have in our ordinances in specific areas. For example, upon taking office, I discovered that the Town did not have a clearly defined Parks Ordinance governing the use of our parks, something your Welaka Town Council is working to correct. With our new Munciple Code

Book, we will be able to clarify any areas in our Town Ordinances that need our attention and work quickly to resolve them.

I also want to take the time to address the road situation in the Town of Welaka. Several residents have come to me to address the condition of our roads. Much of the issues with our unpaved roads with millings have to do with the heavy rain we get each afternoon. Unfortunately, going in at this moment to resurface these roads will lead to a waste of money from the millings simple washing out from the rain. Last week I had our General Maintenance Supervisor order a truckload of millings and lime rock. Our crew is currently going through the neighborhoods filling in any potholes and leveling the roads. I plan, with the Welaka Town Council's approval, of course, to go in later this year after the rainy season and resurface the streets by breaking up the current millings adding fresh millings, and repacking them properly. We are also going to get bids from asphalt companies to repair the paved streets in Town. One of my reasons for forming the Citizens Advisory Task Force was to have them identify the roads they wanted to see paved and prioritize them to start getting them paved. Their plan will be critical in moving us forward in improving our streets. I ask you to please be patient with us as we work to improve our roads.

Finally, as I close out, I want to thank you for your trust in me to lead our community during such an uncertain time in our world. I take my responsibility very seriously. I promise to continue working alongside your Welaka Town Council and all our residents in Welaka as we work to move Welaka forward together.

Best Regards,
Mayor Jamie D. Watts

From Our Council President

Can you remember where you were 20 years ago? At first glance, you might be inclined to say no. But if I clarified the question to be “Can you remember where you were on 9/11?”, I would imagine anyone over the age of 30 would answer with a resounding yes and then give a complete description of how they heard about the horrific events our country faced those years ago.

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the deadliest attack on American soil. Almost 3,000 people lost their lives, citizens of 78 countries. The world mourned with us. You may be wondering where I am going with this. First of all, at the risk of sounding like a cliché, we must never forget. And secondly, as a way to honor those who lost their lives, I would encourage you to participate in the National Day of Service and Remembrance. There are many national organizations that offer volunteer opportunities in recognition of this day. However, we don't even need to go that route. Many volunteer opportunities exist right here in Welaka. Contact your local church or community leader. They likely know of needs that may not be readily apparent. Do you have an elderly neighbor? Maybe a new mother in your neighborhood or someone homebound that would appreciate a home-cooked meal? Whatever the need, large or small, you can make a difference in the life of another. Let us do good to one another, and let us never forget.

In your service,

Jessica Finch
Welaka Town Council President

Appointments of Town Boards and Committees

Your Welaka Town Council has appointed and confirmed the members to serve on the Town Boards and Committees in the Town. Below are the members selected. We will be publishing the dates of the meetings for each board or committee as they are scheduled. All board and committee meetings are open to the public and we welcome your attendance and participation.

Charter Committee

Mayor Watts is the Chair of the Committee

David Jeltes

Alexa Peronard

Richard Pelehach

Glenn M. Hammond

Janis Brown

Events Committee

Courtney Desouza

Diana Gonzalez

Debbie Edwards

Erin Jeltes

Christian Marie

Citizens Advisory Board

Council President Finch is the Chair of the Committee

Pamela Olson

Robert Turnbull

Isaiah Mills

John Karichkowsky

Michael Anthony

Code Enforcement and Zoning Board

David Jeltes

Glenn M. Hammond

Robert Turnbull

Eddie Johns

Raymond Roerick

Code Enforcement Board

Monthly Town Meetings

All meetings are at Welaka Town Hall

Located at 400 4th Ave. Welaka, Fl. 32193

September 14, 2021

Zoning Board Meeting 5:30 PM

Code Enforcement Meeting 5:45 PM

Town Council Meeting 6:30 PM

Budget Meetings

September 4, 2021, at 8:30 AM

September 18, 2021, at 8:30 AM

All five will be live-streamed on our Town of Welaka Facebook Page and on our YouTube Channel

September Meter Reading

Will be reading water meters on September 15th. If you have any issues with your water or sewer remember the Town Utility Department is available 24 hours a day at (386) 467-8677 or TDD (800) 955-8771. We ask you to please do your part in conserving water.

Garbage Pickup

Garbage and Recycling pick up will be September 7th, 13th, 20th, 27th. Yard debris pick-up will be on September 7th and the 20th. Please remember to call Waste Pro at (386) 328-5445 if you have any issues with your garbage, yard debris or recycling pick up.

Pay Your Water Bill Online

You can now pay your water bill online using our Online Utility Bill pay system. To get started go to www.welakawater.com and create your account. In your account, you can track your monthly water usage and even set up your account for auto-pay so you never have to worry about a late charge again. If you need assistance setting up your account online please call our Utility Department at (386) 467-9800 option 4. You can also drop your payment by Town Hall anytime using our Utility Payment drop box located to the right of the front door of Town Hall.

August's Recognitions and Proclamations

None for August

If you would like to recognize a Town of Welaka resident for dedicated community service to our Town, a local student with exceptional grades, or to nominate a Town resident who is celebrating a landmarked birthday such as turning 100 years old, please contact our Town Clerk Jennifer McDaniel at (386) 467-9800 or by email at jennifermcdaniel@welaka-fl.gov. We will be happy to recognize them at our next Council Meeting by public recognition.



TOWN OF WELAKA GOVERNMENT CONTACT LIST:

You may contact the Mayor and Town Council members by phone through the Town Hall phone system or send an email to their official Town of Welaka accounts.

To leave a voicemail message for a Town Council member

Method 1

1. Call the **Town of Welaka Town Hall at 386-467-9800**
2. Press the "Town Hall Extension" number of the person to reach their voicemail

Method 2

1. Call the **Town of Welaka Town Hall at 386-467-9800**
2. When the phone system begins speaking press "7"
3. Press the "Option" number of the Council Member to reach their voicemail

Mayor & Town Council Members

Mayor Jamie Watts

386-467-9800 (Option 7, Option 1)
Town Hall Extension: 101
jwatts@welaka-fl.gov

Council President Jessica Finch

386-467-9800 (Option 7, Option 2)
Town Hall Extension: 200
jfinch@welaka-fl.gov

Councilwoman Marianne Milledge

386-467-9800 (Option 7, Option 3)
Town Hall Extension: 201
mmilledge@welaka-fl.gov

Town Departments

Michael Porath - Police Chief

Direct Line: 386-524-4015
Town Hall Extension: 107
mporath@welaka-fl.gov

Jennifer McDaniel - Town Clerk

Direct Line: 386-524-4010
Town Hall Extension: 102
jennifermcdaniel@welaka-fl.gov

Kendrea Welch - Utility Clerk

Direct Line: 386-524-4016
Town Hall Extension: 103
kwelch@welaka-fl.gov

Councilwoman Tonya Long
386-467-9800 (Option 7, Option 4)
Town Hall Extension: 202
tonyalong@welaka-fl.gov

Councilwoman Kathy Washington
386-467-9800 (Option 7, Option 4)
Town Hall Extension: 202
kwashington@welaka-fl.gov

Justin Morris - Building Department
Direct Line: 386-524-4013
Town Hall Extension: 105
building@welaka-fl.gov



Friends of Welaka
presents
a meet and greet
**ICE Cream
SOCIAL**

WITH WELAKA'S POLICE CHIEF

Mike Porath

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 11
11th AM-NOON

*Welaka Town Hall
Pavilion*

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The Founding of Putnam County

Putnam County was created in 1849. It was Florida's 28th county created from parts of St. Johns, Alachua, Orange, Duval, and Marion counties. The county was named for Benjamin A. Putnam, who was an officer in the First Seminole War, a lawyer, Florida legislator, and the first president of the Florida Historical Society. The Putnam County Historical Society has determined that Benjamin A. Putnam is the grandson of Israel Putnam, for whom other counties and places in the United States are named Benjamin A. Putnam died in the county seat of Palatka in 1869.



Benjamin A. Putnam

Town of Welaka

SEPTEMBER 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11 20 Anniversary of Sept 11 We Will Always Remember Ice Cream Social Meet The Chief 11:00 AM
12	13	14 Zoning Board Meeting 5:30 PM Code Enforcement Meeting 5:45 PM Town Council Meeting 6:30 PM	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		
		Notes:				